

THE NEW ENGLAND
ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH.

ORGANIZED FEBRUARY 23, 1901.

LEAFLET
NO. 60

REPORTED BY
THE SECRETARY

MARCH 1
1909

THE NEW REQUIREMENTS

The changes in the requirements may fail to satisfy because too radical, or not radical enough, — but it cannot be said that the recent Conference acted without due consideration. An industrious sub-committee spent a year in canvassing expert opinion on fundamentals and on details. Its preliminary report was (privately) handled “without gloves” by several critical bodies of college and school men; and the revised report was taken up line by line by a full representative National Conference. Of course, compromises that satisfy neither side wholly are sometimes the only agreements that busy men, with strong opinions, from various parts of the country, can come to in the limited time available for discussion. Some fundamental changes, however, adopted on Feb. 22, cannot fail to please, in whole or in part.

There was practically no opposition to the “open list,” and the Conference voted strongly in favor of divided examinations; accordingly, the reading books were revised and re-grouped so as to provide a more continuous course in preparation for the study books. Greater emphasis is laid on grammar and composition; “will,” however, yields to “may” at several danger-spots. Non-literary topics for compositions are officially recognized for the first time. A separation of the test in composition from the test in literature is begun. It is significant that not a vote could be got for the proposal to insert in the paragraph on Literature the additional sentence: “The books of both lists should also be used as a basis for frequent practice in English composition.” In order to meet a strong demand, the Conference made a new group, and put it first; but out of deference to religious or local objections to the use of the Bible in school, and to the objections of classical teachers to the authorized, as well as the unauthorized, use of English translations, the Conference accepted substitutes (which may embarrass the makers of lucid examination papers). The call for questions on literary biography and history is sounded rather more loudly. Memorizing and oral examinations, though not yet “required,” are being more strongly urged. An accurate, but not official, statement of the requirement, as adopted, follows:

“Preparation in English has two main objects: (1) command of correct and clear English, spoken and written; (2) ability to read with accuracy, intelligence, and appreciation.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND COMPOSITION. The first object requires instruction in grammar and composition. English grammar should ordinarily be reviewed in the secondary school; and correct spelling and grammatical accuracy should be rigorously exacted in connection with all written work during the four years. The principles of English composition governing punctuation, the use of words, paragraphs, and the different kinds of whole composition, including letter-writing, should be thoroughly mastered, and practice in composition oral as well as written, should extend throughout the secondary school period. Written exercises may well comprise narration, description, and easy exposition and argument based upon simple outlines. It is advisable that subjects for this work be taken from the student's personal experience, general knowledge, and studies other than English, as well as from his reading in literature. Finally, special instruction in language and composition should be accompanied by concerted effort of teachers in all branches to cultivate in the student the habit of using good English in his recitations and various exercises, whether oral or written.

LITERATURE. The second object is sought by means of two lists of books, headed respectively *reading* and *study*, from which may be framed a progressive course in literature covering four years. In connection with both lists, the student should be trained in reading aloud and be encouraged to commit to memory some of the more notable passages both in verse and in prose. As an aid to literary appreciation, he is further advised to acquaint himself with the most important facts in the lives of the authors whose works he reads and with their place in literary history.

a. *Reading.* The aim of this course is to foster in the student the habit of intelligent reading and to develop a taste for good literature, by giving him a first-hand knowledge of some of its best specimens. He should read the books carefully, but his attention should not be so fixed upon details that he fails to appreciate the main purpose and charm of what he reads.

With a view to large freedom of choice, the books provided for reading are arranged in the following groups, from which at least ten units* are to be selected, two from each group :

I. The *Old Testament*, comprising at least the chief narrative episodes in *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, *Kings*, and *Daniel*, together with the books of *Ruth* and *Esther*; the *Iliad*, with the omission, if desired, of Books XI, XIII, XIV, XV, XVII, XXI; the *Odyssey*, with the omission, if desired, of Books I, II, III, IV, V, XV, XVI, XVII; Vergil's *Aeneid*. The *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid* should be read in English translations of recognized literary excellence.

For any unit of this group a unit from any other group may be substituted.

II. Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*; *Midsummer Night's Dream*; *As You Like It*; *Twelfth Night*; *Henry the Fifth*; *Julius Cæsar*.

III. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe, Part I*; Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*; either Scott's *Ivanhoe* or Scott's *Quentin Durward*; Hawthorne's

* Each unit is set off by semicolons.

House of the Seven Gables; either Dickens's *David Copperfield* or Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities*; Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*; Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford*; George Eliot's *Silas Marner*; Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

IV. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress, Part I*; the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers* in the *Spectator*; Franklin's *Autobiography* (condensed); Irving's *Sketch Book*; Macaulay's *Essays on Lord Clive and Warren Hastings*; Thackeray's *English Humourists*; selections from Lincoln, including at least the two *Inaugurals*, the *Speeches in Independence Hall* and at *Gettysburg*, the *Last Public Address*, and *Letter to Horace Greeley*, along with a brief memoir or estimate; Parkman's *Oregon Trail*; either Thoreau's *Walden* or selections from Huxley's *Lay Sermons* (to be announced); Stevenson's *Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey*.

V. Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* (First Series), Books II and III, with especial attention to Dryden, Collins, Gray, Cowper, and Burns; Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* and Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*; Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and Lowell's *Vision of Sir Launfal*; Scott's *Lady of the Lake*; Byron's *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, and *Prisoner of Chillon*; Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* (First Series), Book IV, with especial attention to Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley; Poe's *Raven*, Longfellow's *Courtship of Miles Standish*, and Whittier's *Snow Bound*; Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* and Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*; Tennyson's *Gareth and Lynette*, *Lancelot and Elaine*, and *The Passing of Arthur*; Browning's *Cavalier Tunes*, *The Lost Leader*, *How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*, *Home Thoughts from Abroad*, *Home Thoughts from the Sea*, *Incident of the French Camp*, *Hervé Riel*, *Pheidippides*, *My Last Duchess*, *Up at a Villa — Down in the City*.

b. *Study*. This part of the requirement is intended as a natural and logical continuation of the student's earlier reading, with greater stress laid upon form and style, the exact meaning of words and phrases, and the understanding of allusions. For this close reading are provided a play, a group of poems, an oration, and an essay, as follows:

Shakespeare's *Macbeth*; Milton's *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso*, and *Comus*; either Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with America* or both Washington's *Farewell Address* and Webster's *First Bunker Hill Oration*; either Macaulay's *Life of Johnson* or Carlyle's *Essay on Burns*.

EXAMINATION. However accurate in subject-matter, no paper will be considered satisfactory if seriously defective in punctuation, spelling, or other essentials of good usage.

The examination will be divided into two parts, one of which may be taken as a preliminary, and the other as a final.

The first part of the examination will be upon ten units chosen, in accordance with the plan described earlier, from the lists headed *reading*; and it may include also questions upon grammar and the simpler principles of rhetoric, and a short composition upon some topic drawn from the student's general knowledge or experience. In grammar and rhetoric, the candidate may be asked specific questions upon the practical essentials of these studies, such as the relation of the various parts of a sentence to one another, the con-

struction of individual words in a sentence of reasonable difficulty, and those good usages of modern English which one should know in distinction from current errors. On the books prescribed for reading, the form of the examination will usually be the writing of short paragraphs on several topics which the candidate may choose out of a considerable number. These topics will involve such knowledge and appreciation of plot, character-development, and other qualities of style and treatment as may be fairly expected of boys and girls.

The second part of the examination will include composition and those books comprised in the list headed *study*. The test in composition will consist of one or more essays, developing a theme through several paragraphs; the subjects will be drawn from the books prescribed for *study*, from the candidate's other studies, and from his personal knowledge and experiences quite apart from reading. For this purpose the examiner will provide several subjects, perhaps five or six, from which the candidate may make his own selections. The test on the books prescribed for study will consist of questions upon their content, form, and structure, and upon the meaning of such words, phrases, and allusions as may be necessary to an understanding of the works and an appreciation of their salient qualities of style. General questions may also be asked concerning the lives of the authors, their other works, and the periods of literary history to which they belong."

NOTE — By the constitution, adopted Feb. 22, 1909, each of the following constituent bodies is entitled to three delegates to the National Conference on Uniform Requirements in English: The N. E. Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, the Associations of the Middle States and Maryland, of the North Central States, and of the Southern States, the Conference of N. E. Colleges on Entrance Requirements in Eng., and the College Entrance Exam. Board. Additions to membership are provided for on recommendation of the Executive Committee: CHAIRMAN, Prof. F. H. Stoddard, *N. Y. University*; VICE-CHAIRMAN, Prof. C. T. Winchester, *Wesleyan*; SEC.-TREAS., Prin. Wilson Farrand, *Newark Academy*; and Prof. F. N. Scott, *Univ. Mich.*, and Prof. W. L. Cross, *Yale*. By courteous invitation of the Conference, three delegates from the N. E. Assoc. of Teachers of English and one from Princeton took part in the recent discussion. The action of the Conference was influenced by the replies of 76 colleges and 132 schools to the questions of the Committee on Revision, very briefly summarized as follows:

<i>Special test in Gram.</i>			<i>Two Exams.</i>		<i>Two lists</i>		<i>Open list</i>	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Colleges	41	27	29	35	41	25	53	15
Schools	58	71	73	39	104	24	108	18
	99	98	102	74	145	49	161	33
<i>Non-literary topics</i>			<i>Old Testament</i>		<i>No list at all</i>		<i>Radical change</i>	
	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Colleges	57	7	49	21	16	52	26	32
Schools	102	24	77	43	18	111	11	83
	159	31	126	64	34	163	37	115